DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 109 473 CE 004 330

AUTHOR Loring, Rosalind
TITLE Women in the Profession of Adult Education.
PUB DATE [Mar 75]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Change Strategies; Females; *Feminism; *Sex Discrimination; Social Factors; Speeches; *Women Professors; Women Teachers

ABSTRACT

The challenge of International Women's Year for us is to expand educational opportunities for all women. Between and among the national organizations we can demonstrate our willingness to share our accumulated knowledge of problem-solving methods applied to personal and community needs both here and abroad. Relatively recent trends (modern psychology, the pill, increased education for women) have altered the lives of women and, therefore, of men and of nations. When we turn to women workers who are professionals in adult and continuing education, several specifics are apparent: a few women have always been in the field; women's activities have expanded into other fields; there has been a rapid growth in participation by women adult educators in the specific field of women's rights, and in other new fields such as black studies and adult basic education. The issues of employment are complicated by a number of trends now emerging that are potentially in direct conflict with traditional procedures and standards. Many women are using the legal approach to correcting inequity. My own preference is also to seek alternative means. Both men and women will benefit if we approach the future experimentally. (Author/PR)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED109473

Rosalind Loring

WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION OF ADULT EDUCATION

International Women's Year, as with other activities which highlight, is intended to alert people to a problem area; to induce discussion, consideration; to develop ways of resolving difficulties, and to reach agreement on some basic issues.

Typically the selection of a global theme is the result of an accelerating concern, already evidenced in earlier sessions. World Hunger -- Overpopulation -- and now the Role of Women: these issues selected by the United Nations, the United States or other nations are not new. All are heralded by such events as the "Airlie House Conference" on population and development, and the First National Conference of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. But the fact that they are not new only emphasizes more starkly that neither are they easily resolvable. Indeed, a "year" in the life of themes of this magnitude is as a one-day workshop in the learning of a new skill, or a single evening in a lecture series on changing parental behavior.

Moreover, International Women's Year is not the first time that people in this country have heard from women -- and from government -- about the need to reorient policies and procedures of institutions, organizations and agencies as they relate to women. We go all the way back to Abigail Adams's letter, written to her husband John in 1776, admonishing him that at the Continental Congress, he must "Remember the Ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors" or "we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any

CE004330

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

JUN 06 1975

Laws in which we have no vote or Representation."

Since that date, each renewed attack upon discrimination has meant new gains.

It has been about ten years since women's energies resurfaced in this newest revolution, along with the revolutions of other disaffected, dissatisfied groups, including ethnic minorities, youth and the aged. As in the past, so with the present concentration of effort there is renewed hope for change.

The beginnings of our current condition are much too long ago for us to consider here in detail. There have been the millions of years during which human beings, male and female, biologically developed differences in size and strength. There have been centuries since recorded history began, chronicling over and over the unnatural, intellect-created differences in role and status. The tales and testimony are all too familiar -- so familiar that many among our people query "Why now?" Because these differences have always existed, they ask now, "Can anyone change human behavior? Is it,in fact, wise, safe, or even possible?" And if discrepancies in treatment are so prevalent, why do women persist in attempting to enforce new rules and regulations?

Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that history depends upon interpretation, and the interpretation is contingent upon the experience and value system of the historian. Some in the women's movement are currently engaged in rewriting history books to recount the numerous times when women have been administrators, teachers, social commentators and active agents of social change.

But even this reconstruction of the deeds, contributions and capabilities of women -- valuable though it surely is -- will not deal with the crux of the matter as I see it. Today, now, here is dramatically different than past eras, centuries or decades. Although we need to know about the past for understanding and guidance and continuity, more critical is the recognition that recent changes in life style have forced women to both action and reaction in order to attain congruence in their lives! They seek to narrow the distance between the realities of tradition and myth and of their actual daily life patterns.

Relatively recent trends have altered the lives of women, and therefore of men and of nations. I shall mention only a few -- there are many others which could be listed:

-- The twentieth century emphasis upon psychological health promulgated by the insights of Sigmund Freud, John Dewey, Erik Erikson, Karen Horney and a host of current gurus. Their messages (much simplified here but all carrying the same major underlying themes):

. . . . Release your children, mothers. Give them freedom rather than guilt, encourage them to independence, even to strategic distance from you.

. . . . Be not guilty yourself as you rebel at doing that which you dislike. Do only what makes you feel good.

. . . . Boredom, apathy or living through others are not prerequisites of the human condition. You can do something about it!

-- The technological breakthrough of the Pill on the one hand and the stunning realization on the other that we cannot continue to populate the earth as we have since man and woman began. Their corollary emergence has culminated in individual control of birth to an extent never imagined until recent years. As a result personal decisions have impacted the economy in a rippling effect seldom experienced and rarely acknowledged for the size and degree of influence.

-- Increased education combined with financial independence for growing numbers of women. More knowledgeable and experienced, it is now economically as well as intellectually feasible for women to follow through on expanded awareness and the search for meaning. Enough women have stopped thinking of themselves as "girls" and have become women -- mature adults who are able to wage at least a non-violent revolution and are prepared to take the consequences as well as the rewards. Accompanying this is the growing recognition of government leaders everywhere regarding the favorable impact of women workers on the economy of the nation. Whether heads of households or helpmates, women are contributors as well as consumers. <u>They have upped the GNP!</u>

When we turn to women workers who are professionals in adult and continuing education, several specifics are apparent:

-- A few women have always been in the field. During the past 100 years they have been administrators; (although usually concentrated in certain professions such as

nursing and home economics) and planners of correspondence study or credit classes.

-- Over the years, women's activities expanded into other fields, corresponding to -- and indicative of -- changes relevant to the times. Volunteers and community organization training, literature and languages, the arts, planning, to name a few.

-- The past ten years have seen rapid growth in participation by women adult educators in the specific field of women's studies, and beyond this in other new fields such as Black studies and Basic Adult Education. Some few have found a niche in health, social welfare and other helping professions. A lesser number are involved in liberal studies.

With respect to women as teachers of adults, we now find them in almost every field, including many once thought to be wholly reserved to men: management, business, engineering, mathematics, theater arts, zoology, law, computers, and even parapsychology. In educational institutions, professional organizations, government agencies and private sector training there are, however, painfully few women in decision-making positions as deans, directors, managers or executives. On every board, commission, council, task force, or major committee, women are token and in the minority.

One major difficulty for those who would lessen inequities is the absolute paucity of hard data, of research, statistics and analyses, as pointed out in the 1972 report of the

U.S. Office of Education, "A Look at Women in Education..." which dealt with the impact of Office of Education Programs on women.[1] There are a few studies germane to women's role in higher education in general, or in all education including:

-- Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. Fact Sheet on the Earnings Gap and other compilations relating to women's comparative positions in the work force.

-- National Education Association. Salaries Paid and Salary Related Practices, 1971-1972.

-- Reports from the National Center for Education Statistics, American Association of University Women, Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) and various private researchers, including master's and doctoral candidates. Please note that these studies have been almost entirely carried out by women.

-- The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Clark Kerr, Chairman. The Commission reported in September 1973,[2] as have other studies, that women earn on the average less than men in comparable situations, and further that most women are not in comparable positions. (The report estimated $150 to $200 million loss to women per year across the nation.)

There are even fewer studies specifically referring to women in

---

1. U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. A Look at Women in Education: Issues and Answers for HEW. Report of the Commissioner's Task Force on the Impact of the Office of Education Programs on Women, November 1972.
2. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Opportunities for Women in Higher Education. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973

adult education; one of great help is The Status of Women in the Adult Education Association of the United States of America by Susan Wilson (for a course at Federal City College, June 1973).

The issues of employment are complicated by a number of trends now emerging that are potentially in direct conflict with the field's traditional procedures and standards:

--The growing numbers of women enrolled in adult and continuing education, i.e., the fastest-growing numbers in any group of students. Data for 1973 show 57% women enrolled, 43% men.[3]

--Government action based upon public agreement that the inequities of history and tradition are no longer acceptable or tolerable. We now have Executive Orders, the Civil Rights Act, Federal and State Legislation -- and we also have counter actions by institutions!

--The 1972 recommendation by the Office of Education Commissioner's Task Force for stringent enforcement of Title IX regulations regarding the search, employment, training, promotion and retention of women. To encourage compliance further, an additional recommendation urged that government money/funds should not be paid out to institutions unless and until good faith had been adequately demonstrated.

--The Association of American Colleges staff of trained researchers and communicators. Several persons are involved -- testifying before Congress, alerting AAC member institutions on important trends and developments,

3. Adult Basic Education Program Statistics, NCES, DHEW Publications.

clarifying issues for women employees, pressuring for institutional change. As an example, a recent issue of AAC's On Campus with Women newsletter reported the University of Southern Florida's salary increases for 100 faculty women totalling $151,000. Other issues dealt with have included retirement inequities; part-time employment for men as well as for women; and paternal as well as maternal leave.

-- Heightened aspirations in growing numbers of women, even in women in adult education (who in the past have been less demanding and less overt than professional women in other fields). In this connection, it should be noted that the Conference for Women in Administration of Continuing Education, held September 1974 at the University of Iowa under the combined auspices of AEA and NUEA, uncovered more cynicism and complaint than was evident in previous years.

While many people wistfully try to think of ways to stuff these disturbing and distracting events back into Pandora's Box -- and while government officials, administrators in educational institutions charged with enforcing Affirmative Action, and husbands, friends and others affected by newly emerging woman, are finding life confused, complex and frequently uncomfortable -- I know of no women who are not more militant than they were five years ago!

With the new laws on the books to back them up, many women are using the "big stick" of the legal approach to correcting inequity, believing that justice (in the form of progress, of course) will be found only through a lawsuit. The courts and the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Office of Education are

crammed with queries and cases. Each Supreme Court ruling begets more action. Indeed, women -- who to date have made up less than 5% of the legal profession -- are forming their own law firms, specializing in just this arena.

My own preference is also to seek alternative means. And even for those women who regard the law as their best support, there is much they can do while waiting to get on the docket. Here are just a few ideas:

-- Women must not let themselves get ghettoized occupationally. They must move out beyond the limits of the island of Continuing Education for Women, valuable and necessary though that is.

-- Women must develop more than one specialty. It may be another branch of their specific discipline -- an academic field; or it may be an administrative skill. At UCLA Extension in addition to program managers there are four women managers all earning more than $20,000, in Employee Services, the Registrar's Office, the Business and Fiscal Office, and Public Relations.

-- Women must be available for more responsibility and different working hours. They must be ready and willing to move to another city.

-- They must be alert to new program trends. Programs for the aging, vocational/career education, bilingual programs are today's examples; tomorrow's are yet unknown.

-- They must be prepared to relate to faculty women on the campus of their institution; to women in administrative positions, as they move into roles as, say

Dean of the Business School, or Director of a new Drug Abuse Center. They must relate, too, to women in government offices, to the new woman cabinet member, as Secretary of Housing, and to the slowly growing numbers of women on local school boards and in Congress.

-- Women must constantly stay relevant. That battle is never won. They will be tried in such crucibles as those of urban planning; the attack on the economic/energy problems of our day; other new fields as yet not visible.

-- And because women live longer and find their energies often lasting later in life, they will have to be more attentive to a variety of groups in order to adjust to the styles of different ages and values.

On the other hand, women do not live and work in isolation; they are constantly interactive with men and institutions. Thus:

1) Men must stop parenting women and let them make their own decisions regarding moving, marriage and modes of living and size of salary.

2) Men must not misconstrue women's difference in tone of voice or style of expression or even of value systems and therefore assume weakness. Women may not use familiar expressions of ego involvement but the urge to sign a check is the same.

3) Men must counsel women from their own experiences about next steps, booby traps and bureaucratic mines. The woman you train may be your best administrator!

For institutions there are many guidelines to be found within the numerous materials and statements from the Office of Civil Rights as well as various interested public agencies and private organizations and authors.[4] Such helpful though non-household hints on how-to aid women through the system, how-to search for qualified women, etc. are available. I will not list these here, but refer you to a growing field of literature available from University Extension Offices, campus libraries, U.S. Government Printing office, Commission on the Status of Women of the Various States, American Council on Education[5], and the previously mentioned American Association of Colleges. The common thrust in all of these is the achievement of that elusive element, equity.

My concern is ever for the field, for making continuing education the place where student and professional find satisfaction of need and lifelong growth. Women will benefit as will men if we approach the future experimentally -- we in continuing education tend to be in best form when we are cresting the new wave.

To do this....

-- We need the vigor and action of those coming up the ladder -- people with other education and experiences; young people with different goals, perspectives, and values. They may not fit <u>exactly</u> our current manner, but their energies can add substance much needed.

---

4. Rosalind Loring and Theodora Wells. <u>Breakthrough: Women Into Management</u>, Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1972, which lists Affirmative Action Guidelines, and materials and sources for training.
5. American Council on Education. <u>Women In Higher Education</u>, edited by W.T. Furniss and P.A. Graham, 1974.

-- We should be exploring ways of interesting young and old into continuing education as a profession rather than other familiar academic positions. Their content specialization may well be what our new clientele will require.

-- National and regional meetings will have to be so well planned that people get their satisfaction from the meetings rather than hall-rapping. The younger generation grew up rapping and don't want to spend their dollars in the hallway. The meetings thus should contain greater depth, more content and contextual cohesiveness.

-- We should search with more determination and energy for ways to enrich and enhance the role of Continuing Education Specialists, whether in voluntary organizations, government agencies or post-secondary institutions. We should provide them with institutional resources and psychological support. Concurrent personnel questions are related to collective bargaining and that unfamiliar power base.

-- We need among institutional resources (and perhaps first after people) dollars -- the financial amalgam of management and maintenance. We need feasibility studies of our operations, of proposed sources of funding and a determination of whether or not we can continue to survive unless we know the cost/benefit ratio of our programs.

-- We should reassess our relationships with our communities. Can we afford to continue to react or should we be proactive -- ourselves identifying where future needs will be and preparing for those?

The challenge of International Women's Year for us is to expand educational opportunities for all women. Between and among the National organizations we can demonstrate our willingness to share our accumulated knowledge of problem-solving methods applied to personal and community needs both here and abroad. In that process your decisions about women who are professional adult educators will be evermore important.